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ABSTRACT

Conversational Spanish is taught to hearing-impaired adolescents at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) through the use of cued speech. This paper provides an explanation of this mode of instruction and a description of the Spanish program at MSSD. The students learn the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Cued Speech is used to provide phonetic information which is not distinguishable by lipreading alone. Four hand positions placed around the face and neck area help distinguish vowel sounds that appear to be similar on the lips. While the position of the hand cues vowel sounds, the shape of the hand cues different consonant groups. After a basic course in Cued Speech, students have the option of studying Artistic Cued Speech, in which they learn to sing songs and to recite poetry and short essays, or Spanish. Each unit of the Spanish course consists of four phases: presentation of the material by means of film strips; explanation and repetition, the objective being the assimilation of the material; and transposition, the objective being to manipulate the variable elements of the structural units and to transfer the learned material to a variety of new situations. (Author/CLK)

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TEACHING SPANISH TO THE DEAF

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TEACHING SPANISH TO THE DEAF¹
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The Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) was created by an act of Congress in November, 1968 (P.L. 89-694), as a result of a study done by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. This study discovered that less than 10% of deaf high school graduates continue their education. The Model Secondary School for the Deaf was charged with providing an outstanding program in deaf education which would stimulate the development of other such high school programs throughout the nation and stimulate students to pursue higher education. There are neither locked doors nor walls in this model school; the 130 students move about freely involved in programs of individualized study.

Communication is one of the most important aspects of the Model Secondary School for the Deaf. All forms of communication are used. This includes signs, fingerspelling, auditory amplification, oral expression, gestures, cued speech and lipreading. In deaf education, this is called a "Total Communication" approach.

1. The author is indebted to Lawrence Rudner for his assistance with the first draft of this report.

A foreign language program has been part of the total curriculum at MSSD since the school's inception. At the onset, major decisions had to be made: what to stress? reading and writing or conversational Spanish? Oral or manual (sign language) approach?

In the past, reading and writing Spanish had been successfully taught on a college level at Gallaudet. However, this required an 8th grade reading level - a requirement most high school aged hearing-impaired students could not meet.

The Model Secondary School for the Deaf decided that conversational Spanish (as opposed to written Spanish) would be much more beneficial for our students. However, a choice still had to be made between teaching methods: oralism or manualism. Fortunately, just before the school was established, a new form of communication for the deaf was developed. This new mode, called "Cued Speech", was adopted for the school's Spanish program.

The students learn the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing - with the support of Cued Speech.

In Cued Speech, four hand positions placed around the face and neck area are used to provide the information not distinguishable by lipreading alone.

These hand positions group the vowel sounds. This form of phonetic spelling while somewhat based on the "Initial Teaching Alphabet", (ITA), is quite unique. Chart I shows how the vowel sounds are grouped giving word examples.

The four positions of the hand (side of the face, the throat, the chin and a corner of the the mouth) are used to group the vowel sounds.

Vowel sounds which look similar on the lips, such as "uh" (as in but), i (as in it) e (as in bed) and ee (as in feet) are cued by different hand positions. Thus any syllable containing the sound "uh" (as in but) will be cued by placing the hand at the side of the face, while a syllable containing i (as in sit) will be cued by the hand at the throat: e (as in bed), at the chin, and ee (as in feet), at the corner of the mouth. For each position of the hand there are three vowel sounds. Visually, these vowel sounds appear grossly different and are readily differentiated through lipreading.

At the same time that the position of the hand indicates a group of vowel sounds, the shape of the hand indicates a group of consonants. There are eight hand configurations (see Chart II).

In the cue shown in Picture I, the three possible consonants are t-m- and f, with three associated sounds: ma-fa-ta. One can

readily notice the difference in how these consonants' sounds appear on the lips.

Syllables which look alike on the lips are cued differently, eg., "uh", "i", "e", and "ee". Syllables that look alike on the hand look different on the lips - "aw", "e", and "ue".

In cued speech, every sound is read from the lips. The hand serves only to identify a group of three or four sounds that are clearly different from each other on the lips.

Picture II shows the spoken "oe" like in "toe". The student selects among three vowels; u as in but, ah as in father, and oe as in toe. The vowel shown on the lips in "oe", a sound easily lipread. The hand configuration shows the consonant; in this example, "ma", "fa", "ta". One of these would be clearly visible on the lips and the person reading the sound should have no difficulty in making the appropriate discrimination. The picture does not show the consonant sound because the picture was taken at the end of the pronunciation of the syllable. The sound could have been "toe", "moe", or "foe".

Picture III shows the same vowel -oe- but a different hand configuration. This one groups the consonant sound "pa", "da", and "zha", indicating that the syllable was either poe -doe- or zhoe.

In Picture IV, one can see the "oe" sound. The hand configuration groups the consonants' sounds "ba", "na", and "hwa", so the sound cued could be "boe", "noe" or "whoe". No sound can be read from hands alone. Cued Speech is a phonetic system. Words are used by the way they sound, and not as they are spelled.

The previous discussion illustrated that Cued Speech consists of a simple system of hand cues formed in various positions around the mouth simultaneously with speaking. This combined action has the effect of making every different syllable of sound look different to a person who is deaf. The deaf child who is consistently exposed to language through cued speech theoretically will be afforded the same opportunity to absorb language as is a hearing child. Thus, he should acquire an accurate mental model of the spoken language, although the model is visual rather than auditory.

Basic Cued Speech is a course offered by the Communications Department of the Model Secondary School for the Deaf. The students receive instruction in sending and receiving the sounds of spoken English through the Cued Speech method of communication. Once completed, students can take two courses utilizing Cued Speech: Artistic Cued Speech and Spanish.

In Artistic Cued Speech, students learn how to sign songs, recite poetry and short essays through the Cued Speech method of communication. Emphasis is placed on strengthening of the students' phonological concepts of spoken English.

Spanish is the only language offered by the Foreign Language Department. French will be added to the curriculum, in the near future, probably the following school year.

The materials from the textbook, Vida y Dialogos de España, together with the Guberina-Rubenc Methodology, is being used in the Spanish program. As part of the package, there are a series of film strips representing different dialogues. Each film strip is accompanied by a tape.

Because our students have a hearing handicap, the audio tape was replaced with a "live" narrator who cues the dialogue along with the film strip.

Each unit is divided into 4 phases. The Presentation Phase, the Explanation Phase, the Repetition Phase, and the Transposition Phase.

Each dialogue has 21 frames or pictures. In the first phase - the Presentation Phase - the entire dialogue is presented to the students (being cued by the narrator) along with the film strip. The objective of this phase is for the students to have a global understanding of the dialogue.

The second phase is the Explanation Phase. The teacher, asking a series of inquiry questions, progressively leads the student to understand the meaning of the dialogue. The objective is comprehension.

A Repetition Phase follows. The objective is the assimilation of the material. Each student, in the presence of the corresponding picture, individually reproduces each semantic group referring to the live narrator as the constant model. Copies of the picture book with the Cued Speech Phonetic spelling of each frame are used in the first units to help the students with the pronunciation. In later units they read the Spanish spelling.

The last phase is the Transposition Phase. The objective is to transfer what the student has learned by manipulating the variable elements of the structural units. Also, the material learned is transferred to a variety of new situations.

In this Phase, students go through some exercises with the tape and some without the tape. They describe pictures, assume roles, and they narrate the entire story. They transfer learned information to a situation of their own by their behavior in a new but related situation.

CHART I Cues for Vowel Sounds

	<u>Side</u>	<u>Throat</u>	<u>Chin</u>	<u>Mouth</u>
open	ah (father) (got)	a (that)	aw (dog)	
flattened- relaxed	u (but)	i (is)	e (get)	ee (see)
rounded	oe (home)	oo (book)	ue (blue)	ur (her)

Diphthongs

ie (my)	ou (cow)	ae (pay)	oi (boy)

CHART II Cues for Consonant Sounds

t m f	h s r	d p zh	ng y ch	l sh w	k v th s	b n wh	g j th



ILLUSTRATION 1



ILLUSTRATION 2



ILLUSTRATION 3



ILLUSTRATION 4